National Council
for
HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS

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Interpretation of Historic Sites

As the work of the National Council and the National Trust expands, which it is most certainly doing, the need for a good and clear definition of the word "preservation" has become increasingly evident. A stage in the history of these organizations has been reached where, in order to interest others to support preservation activities, terms must be defined.

On the title page of a new pamphlet that will be used primarily in the fund-raising program of the Council and Trust this statement is forthrightly made: "Preservation is a well-rounded program of scientific study, protection, restoration, maintenance and interpretation of sites, buildings, and objects significant in American history and culture." Basically that is the definition offered at the National Council meeting in Williamsburg in 1949 by Dr. Turpin Bannister, Council member and Dean of the School of Architecture at the University of Illinois. It is concise and exact; it is not cluttered up with adjectives; and it is not unnecessarily erudite. The words build a picture of a program with a beginning, a middle phase, and an ending, and Every man who thinks at all can grasp it.

But if this definition is to be accepted by the public - that is, those millions of people who visit and can be interested in supporting historic sites and buildings - more than mere lip service must be paid to the definition by those who plan and administer preservation projects. They are responsible for the carrying out of the component parts of a "well-rounded program." In no phase is their responsibility greater than in interpretation, which, as far as the great majority of the public is concerned, is the final justification of any preservation program.

It can be noted sadly that in many instances preservation projects are allowed to fail at just this point. After months and even years of scientific study, money is poured into a faithful restoration. The product lives by recreating a page of America's past. But then, unfortunately, enthusiasm wanes and little further time and attention are given to what, after all, should be the culminating and continuing phase, interpretation to the public. If an historic site or building is open to the public regularly, as much care should be given to its presentation to the visiting public as was given to the restoration. It is not enough to throw the doors open and wait for the crowd that ofttimes never materializes. It is not enough to assign to the job of reception and explanation just anybody who is available cheap. Most often it is in this final phase of preservation that reputations are made or broken. If the national program is to succeed, it will need the support of the public - and that support will never come if the public is snubbed or neglected at the point where the final impression is made.

IN AND OUT OF HEADQUARTERS

The National Council for Historic Sites and Buildings can only be as great as the sum of its component parts. It is taking justifiable pride, therefore, in its consistent growth, especially in regard to new member organizations. It should come as a pleasant surprise to note that the increase in this category has been greater than 80%, a healthy sign of acceptance on a nationwide scale. We are delighted to welcome into the National Council the following societies:

DETROIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY
DUBUQUE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY (Iowa)
FORT VANCOUVER RESTORATION & HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC. (Washington)
INDEPENDENCE HALL ASSOCIATION (Philadelphia)
LOUISVILLE COUNCIL FOR HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS (Kentucky)
MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
TOMBSTONE RESTORATION COMMISSION (Arizona)

It is an equally great pleasure to greet the first two corporate members of the National Council, THE UNITED STATES POTASH COMPANY and THE GULF OIL CORPORATION. It is highly significant that these two great corporations should consider a Council membership a good investment. An active program to extend this type of membership is now under way. If there are members who have suggestions about possible member corporations, they will be gratefully received.

To facilitate the approach to individuals, organizations and corporations, new literature has been devised by the Headquarters office. The first to come off the press was a small six-page brochure, designed particularly to point out graphically the rate of loss of sites and buildings significant in American history and culture and the meaning of that loss to the community. A more elaborate booklet, now on the press, enlarges on these points and drives home the plea for support of preservation activities.

In the wake of a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Trustees of the National Trust, further attention is now being paid to the processing of potential National Trust properties. It was agreed that all sites or buildings under consideration should be the subject of staff reports, which would be submitted to the National Council's Committee on Standards and Surveys for recommendations. On the basis of these recommendations the Trustees will make the final decision. Since the National Trust does not at this time have the funds to maintain and administer properties that are not self-sustaining or are not endowed, the possibility of acquisition is limited. Furthermore, it will be remembered that acquisition of properties is to be considered a last resort. There is no desire for large-scale aggrandisement; rather, preservation should be achieved by any practicable means.

The field of preservation has again suffered through the deaths of two of its members. In January, Thomas T. Waterman, authority in the field of architectural history an outstanding restoration architect, died after a long illness. Mr. Waterman, whose home was in Washington, was among those Charter Associates who founded the National Council, had expressed his deep interest in its progress and was planning to take a larger part in its growth. In February, Mr. George H. Burnett, President of the St. Croix Landmarks League (Virgin Islands), died suddenly. Mr. Burnett, hearing of the National Council through mutual friends, urged his society to take part in the centralized effort. Several Council members, traveling in the Caribbean, visited Mr. Burnett during the past year and praised the efforts that are being made on St. Croix.

The National Council joined with a member organization, the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, in a fight to save an 18th century house in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Directly opposite the SPNEA's famed Governor John

Langdon House, the Reverend Samuel Langdon Parsonage and adjoining land were offered for sale for commercial purposes by a church group. Every means to stay the proposal was taken, but the effort seems to have been abortive at the time of writing. The supermarket that is to be erected there will add nothing to Portsmouth's fame.

Other actions in which the Council took part on behalf of its members are noted in the following pages. But some are not even mentioned. It is difficult to outline the way in which the Council's influence is being felt. It ranges from advising on a preservation program to the supplying of a single bit of information, available in the Council files or in Washington repositories. Although most of it is done through correspondence, officers and staff members are sometimes able to confer directly. Whatever the technique, the fact remains - and this is evidence of the growth of the idea - more and more persons are turning to this Headquarters for advice on preservation problems.

> Applications are still being accepted for the Third Annual Institute in the Preservation and Interpretation of Historic Sites and Buildings, which is being conducted by the American University, Washington, D. C., June 11-29. The National Council is this year cooperating with Colonial Williamsburg and the National Park Service in presenting this excellent course. Knowledge of the fundamentals of preservation work, together with field study in Washington and Williamsburg, can be of great value to all those interested in the development of sound principles in the restoration and administration of historic sites and buildings. Further information may be obtained until May 15 from National Council Headquarters.

PROPOSED PRESERVATION

Cincinnati, Ohio. This City's Kilgour House got a reprieve from possible razing when the City Council appointed a citizens' committee to study its disposition. Termed a priceless landmark representing Cincinnati in its formative years, the house has just come into city ownership. The whole question led one newspaper to point out that in the past it had suggested a permanent civic group to study and work for the preservation of historic sites, a "neglected civic field."

Sturbridge, Massachusetts. Old Sturbridge Village, a member organization has arranged for the preservation of the Levi Lincoln House, built in Worcester, Massachusetts, in 1836. The Worcester Mutual Fire Insurance Company, which will construct an office building on the site of the house, has agreed not to raze but to disassemble and deliver the building to Old Sturbridge Village. Funds are being raised for its re-erection there.

Princeton, New Jersey. "Morven," 250-year-old mansion, has been offered to the State of New Jersey by one of its former governors, Walter E. Edge. Sole proviso is that the building be used either as a governor's mansion or as a state museum or historic site.

Ligonier, Pennsylvania. Through the purchase of logs at $10 each, subscribers have made possible the beginning of the reconstruction of old Fort Ligonier. Work on the old fort, the only one in the state (with Fort Pitt) that did not fall to the Indians, will start later in the year, according to the Fort Ligonier Foundation.

Auburn, New York. William H. Seward's old home, built shortly before the Civil War, has been left by a descendant to the Fred L. Emerson Foundation and will be made a public memorial.

Mt. Pleasant, Utah. The Pioneer Historical Association has acquired one of the first houses built outside of the fort here, the home of Bishop Seely. It will be used as a pioneer museum.

Easton, Pennsylvania. Restoration of the home of a signer of the Declaration of Independence, George Taylor, has been suggested to the residents of this city.

Harpers Ferry, West Virginia. The proposed Harpers Ferry National Historic Site, which will be developed and administered by the National Park Service, came a step closer to fruition when the West Virginia State Legislature made available its share of the money needed.

Astoria, Oregon. Local groups are discussing the restoration of the historic Flavel House. The suggestion that it be used as a library was referred to a committee for further study.

> The Mount Vernon Ladies Association has completed an excellent documentary film on George Washington's home. Particularly impressive from the point of view of interpretation, which was the subject of discussion on the first page of this Report, are the final words of the soundscript. They go like this: "Here at Mount Vernon we can see an American home that was built when the country was changing - and its people were fearful, but hopeful. We who make a pilgrimage here today live in a world that is also changing - we, too, know fear - but we have hope - and, as in that other time, we are concerned about the way of life that we are building. It is important for us to be reminded how seeds grow when they are carefully planted - how walls stand when they are set on firm foundations - and how ideas of citizenship flower in the soil of liberty. Mount Vernon is not an empty house of memories that are dead - it is an American meeting place where we recognize the living beauty, the order, and the dignity that George Washington built into the structure of our free Republic."

PRESERVATION IN PROGRESS

Cove Neck, New York. The Roosevelt Memorial Association, a member organization, won its battle to proceed with the preservation of Sagamore Hill, Theodore Roosevelt's old home, recently. The Governor signed a bill to circumvent the local zoning regulations, which the community had refused to change so that the site could be developed for visitors.

Inglewood, California. An early Spanish abode, saved by La Casa de la Centinela Association, is now being restored. Surrounded by a veterans' housing development, it will be open to the public one day a week.

Lancaster, Pennsylvania. The City Recreation Association is adapting the Grubb Mansion for use as its own headquarters. Craft rooms and shops will also be installed. A modern band shell is being added in the rear of the building for summer concerts.

Alexandria, Virginia. The Ramsay House restoration is nearing completion because of the voluntary efforts of many individuals, firms and organizations. Instrumental in the saving of this house, one of the first in the old town, were several National Council members and a member organization, the Alexandria Association, Inc.

Orland, Indiana. Work on the restoration of the century-old Congregational Church in this town has been going forward all winter. Slated for razing and replacement by a new structure, it was decided that the historic edifice should remain as a regional religious landmark.

Tappan, New York. Restoration of the DeWint House, built in 1700, is continuing under the aegis of the Free and Accepted Masons of New York State. It has been chartered by the New York State Board of Regents as a memorial to Washington, who signed the death warrant of Major John Andre from this headquarters.

Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Old Salem, Inc., a member organization, is embarking on a new phase of its preservation program by starting the restoration of the Lick-Boner House. A plan to open the old Tavern in cooperation with the Wachovia Historical Society is also being considered.

Shelburne, Vermont. The steamer "Ticonderoga," last of the New England sidewheelers, has been purchased by the Shelburne Museum. Mrs. J. Watson Webb, President of the Museum and a Council member, announced that the steamer would continue in operation on Lake Champlain this summer.

Clackamas County, Oregon. One of the first three Methodist churches in Oregon is being preserved, largely through the inspiration of Mr. W. W. Morrison, of Cheyenne, Wyoming, whose hobby is a study of the Oregon Trail. The people of the neighborhood have given generously of time and money and have restored the old pioneer relic.

> The Louisville Council for Historic Sites and Buildings, a relatively new organization and one of the newest members of the National Council, has successfully fought a battle to save the old Bank of the United States building from destruction. A bridge ramp was designed that would have necessitated the razing of the fine 19th century structure. The Louisville Council's protest pointed out that the ramp could easily be moved so that the building might be saved. A sentence from an officer shows the spirit of the new society: "We think we have saved the old U. S. Bank.... and we are now working on a school of the next decade."

ACTIVE PRESERVATION

Columbia, California. Considerable difficulty is being experienced in obtaining funds to assure the preservation of this historic gold rush town, now a state park. The State Park Commission, after the legislature had cut out its appropriation, called for a stop-gap program to provide minimum funds for stabilizing buildings in danger of falling.

Wilmington, North Carolina. After almost 20 years of restoration work the Cornwallis House, used by the British general in 1781, has been opened to the public by the North Carolina Society of Colonial Dames.

Milton, Pennsylvania. On the recommendation of the state architect, consideration is being given to repairs to the first church in Pennsylvania to be made into a state shrine, historic Warrior Run Church. It was taken over early in 1950 by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, which is a member of the National Council.

Fairfax County, Virginia. The Mount Vernon Citizens' Association held its George Washington Birthnight Ball at Woodlawn this year. This was the first major social affair held in the historic old mansion since it was saved in 1949 by the Woodlawn Public Foundation, Inc.

Rochester, New York. The George Eastman House, where the history of photography is told graphically in the industrialist's turn-of-the-century mansion, has acquired a new building. Dryden Theatre, a modern complement to the old house, was opened recently by Thomas J. Hargrave, president of Eastman Kodak Company. Other alterations and additions are making Eastman House the foremost photographic exhibition in the world.

State of Washington. The Advisory Board of the State Parks and Recreation Commission has completed a study to determine priority and distribution of limited funds among the state's principal historic sites. Thirteen sites in every part of the state will be marked. The survey indicates that considerable work in the field of preservation is being done with the cooperation of local organizations and communities.

Williamsburg, Virginia. Colonial Williamsburg, Inc., has announced that another new attendance record was set during 1950, with more than 200,000 visitors going through the Governor's Palace alone. Reconstruction of King's Arms Tavern has been completed; further restoration of the Carter-Saunders House and the Benjamin Waller House has begun; reconstruction of a number of other buildings, including the Peter Hay Shop, Durfey's Shop, the Blaikley-Durfey House, the Bracken-Carter House, and the Chiswell House, is under way.

Roanoke Island, North Carolina. The National Park Service has announced the completion of the restoration of Fort Raleigh after 12 years of historical and archaeological research. There is still no trace of the site of the houses of Raleigh's Lost Colony, so work will be continued by technicians.

A new preservation organization, Historic Georgetown, Inc., was recently proposed in the District of Columbia. It is the result of a near-razing of three 18th century buildings, considered among the finest in the District, in spite of recent protective zoning legislation, passed by Congress last year. Quick action on the part of perceptive individuals brought the situation to the attention of District officials, who revoked the permit to raze and referred the matter to the Board of Architectural Review.

THE PASSING PARADE

North Little Rock, Arkansas. CIVIL WAR LANDMARK, USED DURING BATTLE OF LITTLE ROCK, RAZED.

Williamstown, Massachusetts. OLDEST BUILDING ON WILLIAMS COLLEGE CAMPUS DESTROYED BY FIRE.

Westernport, West Virginia. DESTRUCTION OF ONE OF OLDEST BUILDINGS BRINGS TO LIGHT HISTORIC BUSINESS DOCUMENTS.

Albany, New York. EARLY TILE FACTORY CONDEMNED.

Los Angeles, California. CITY PAYS TO TEAR DOWN HISTORIC LUGO HOUSE, OLD CHINESE BUDDHIST TEMPLE AND OTHER STRUCTURES.

Margaretville, New York. 106-YEAR-OLD HOUSE, ONCE HOME OF TOWN FOUNDER, RAZED FOR FILLING STATION.

Quincy, Massachusetts. JOHN ADAMS' BIRTHPLACE DAMAGED IN VANDAL RAID.

Altoona, Pennsylvania. TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBER IN 1850'S TORN DOWN FOR PARKING LOT.

Albion, New York. FIRE DESTROYING 116-YEAR-OLD CHURCH CAUSED BY NEW OIL BURNER.

New York, New York. PRESERVATIONISTS LOSE FIGHT TO SAVE WASHINGTON SQUARE'S RHINELANDER HOUSE, NOW RAZED FOR APARTMENT HOUSE.

Detroit, Michigan. GORDON HALL, ONE OF THE MIDDLE WEST'S FOREMOST ARCHITECTURAL MONUMENTS, PARTIALLY RAZED FOR CONVERSION TO APARTMENTS.

> The American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society at a luncheon early in the year made its annual awards for public service in preservation work. The George McAneny medals for antiquarian and historical service were presented to Franco Scalamandre, prominent textile manufacturer whose cooperation with restoration projects is well known, and Lloyd W. Smith, noted for his contributions to Morristown (New Jersey) National Historical Park. The Pugsley gold medal for scenic and public usage effort was granted to Newton B. Drury, then Director of the National Park Service; the silver medal to Frank A. Kittredge, former superintendent of Yosemite National Park and now chief engineer of the Park Service; and the bronze medal to William Haynes, curator of the Denison Homestead, Stonington, Connecticut.

"NATIONAL SOCIETY HELPS LOCAL GROUPS...."

That is part of a headline of one of the finest articles ever written about the National Council. It appeared in the New Bedford (Massachusetts) Sunday Standard-Times not so long ago. What was so impressive about the three columns was the perceptiveness of the author, who worked from a mass of material sent to her by the Headquarters staff and unerringly emphasized the true significance of what the Council and Trust are trying to do. The second paragraph reads like this: "The name perhaps is not familiar. The organization and the associated National Trust for Historic Preservation in the United States, founded in 1949 (not a Government organization, though established by Congress) have worked without fanfare. But they have been busy to good purpose and they have grown greatly." A little later: "The Council isn't just one more organization. It is a federation of organizations, corporations and individuals interested in the preservation of the American heritage." And finally: "Americans who have thrilled to

the sight of Plymouth Rock and the homes of early New England settlers; to log cabins, sod houses and abodes of those who pioneered other sections of the country; to the old forts where valiant blows were struck for national freedom, to time-hallowed churches, meeting houses, synagogues and old Spanish missions, to Independence Hall, Mt. Vernon, and the White House, to early school and college buildings and myriad other landmarks that make history alive, are likely to be better Americans. That is the fundamental idea back of the National Council and Trust." If any readers are interested in having copies of the complete article, the Headquarters office will gladly supply them.

Miss Helen Lowenthal, Lecturer in Fine Arts at the University of Cambridge, England, and Consultant to the Royal Trust of British Architects, is offering a number of lectures on historic houses of Britain this spring. She is available through June 30 and may be reached through Mr. Reginald Barrett, British Embassy, Washington, D. C. Miss Lowenthal has met with some of the officers and staff of the National Council, sharing her intensive knowledge of preservation in England.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTES

Cooperstown, New York. The sites of ancient Indian villages are being excavated on the banks of Oaks Creek near Cooperstown. Materials from 8,000 years ago have been uncovered in a survey attempting to trace the various migrations of pre-historic people through the Susquehanna and Mohawk Valley.

Spokane, Washington. The exact site of the original Fort Spokane, long the subject of controversy, has been located on the confluence of the Spokane and Little Spokane Rivers. Also definitely established was the outer perimeter of the stockade built for John Jacob Astor's Pacific Fur Company in 1811.

Paul Green's Symphonic drama, "Faith of Our Fathers," will be presented in the amphitheatre in Rock Creek Park in Washington, D. C., again this summer. Produced under the auspices of the National Capital Sesquicentennial Commission, it will run from June 1 to September 3. The theme of the outdoor spectacle is George Washington. Imaginative and stirring and well worth an evening.

NEWTON B. DRURY RESIGNS

One of the most loyal supporters of the National Council, Mr. Newton B. Drury, has resigned as the Director of the National Park Service. Mr. Drury was among the original group that lent support to the formation and growth of the Council. His advice and counsel, frequently sought, were freely given. Fortunately, he is not forsaking the twin fields of conservation and preservation, for shortly he will take office as Chief of the Division of Beaches and Parks in California.

The loss to the National Council is lessened by the fact that four Charter Associates are moving up the National Park Service ranks. The new Director is Mr. Arthur E. Demaray; into his former position as Associate Director goes Mr. Conrad L. Wirth; and into Mr. Wirth's position as Assistant Director goes Mr. Ronald F. Lee, who has ably served the Council since its inception as Secretary. Mr. Herbert E. Kahler, present Chairman of the Council's Nominating Committee, succeeds Mr. Lee as Chief Historian.

Dorchester Heights, site of a major Revolutionary War fortification, has been named a national historic site by the Secretary of the Interior on the recommendation of the Advisory Board of the National Park Service. The City of Boston will continue to maintain the site, which is marked by a memorial. Similar cooperative agreements with the Federal Government are in force in other major historic sites, including Federal Hall in New York City and San Jose Mission in Texas.

PENNSYLVANIA CONSIDERS IMPORTANT PRESERVATION LEGISLATION

In January the Joint State Government Commission, which has been appointed by the General Assembly in 1949, presented its report. The Sub-Committee on Historic Sites, after conferring with the Committee on Advisors, the Chairman of which was Council member Judge Edwin O. Lewis, recommended adequate legislation to protect historic sites and structures in the Commonwealth. On March 5, Bill No. 269 was introduced into the Senate of the General Assembly and referred to the Committee on State Government. This Bill declares that certain named historic sites and buildings, previously reported by the Commission to the General Assembly, should be declared "historic shrines"; that "all historic shrines in the Commonwealth are affected with the public interest and shall be preserved to the extent necessary to maintain their public value"; that such shrines may not be altered or defaced without the approval of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (a member organization of the Council). The bill has been given teeth, for the Commission may obtain injunctions to restrain threatened action and a fine or prison sentence (up to six months) or both may be levied upon conviction. Owners will be compensated for any damages suffered.

Pennsylvania, which has been paying increasing attention to its historic heritage, thus becomes the first state to consider statewide protective legislation. The passage of this bill would be a signal victory for the cause of preservation, setting a precedent that could be followed throughout the United States.

The New York State Historical Association's annual Seminars in American Culture will be held in Cooperstown, New York, during the week July 5-12. Of particular interest to National Council members is a morning course on the historical society and an afternoon course on the small history museum. An excellent faculty, including a number of Council members and representatives, has been assigned. An interesting postlude is offered by the Association, in cooperation with Thomas Cook & Son, in the form of a seven-day scenic and historic escorted motor coach trip through the State.

"HISTORIC SITES ARE GOOD BUSINESS"

- That is a caption on one of the pages of the new Fact Sheet now being used by the National Council and Trust in connection with its fund-raising efforts. Recently released figures on visitation to some of the historic sites and buildings throughout the country support this thesis. During the National Park Service travel year, which ends on September 30, more than 12,000,000 persons visited the sites and structures preserved by the Federal Government for their historic value. In 1950, 919,513 visitors came to Mount Vernon, while 1,876,766 persons were reported at the properties administered by the Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society. Let those who might respond that Mount

Vernon is an unusual case reflect on the first five areas in point of attendance in Ohio. Each of the following places had between 245,000 and 146,000 visitors; the George Rogers Clark State Memorial, the Fort Ancient Earthworks, the Newark Earthworks, Schoenbrunn Village, and Fort Meigs.

> Through the interest of Mr. Laurance S. Rockefeller, "Whitehall," one of Maryland's distinguished architectural monuments, will be the subject of an architectural and historical survey during the forthcoming year. The 18th century building is the property of Council member Charles Scarlett, Jr., who will be a member of the Supervisory Committee appointed by The Maryland Historical Society. Mr. Worth Bailey, Research Associate at Mount Vernon, and Mr. J. Everette Fauber, Jr., will conduct the research and architectural studies. The Committee will work in cooperation with the National Trust and National Council, so that the techniques and findings may be published.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

A nationally syndicated columnist recently took his children to see Independence Hall and other Philadelphia sites. His reactions (favorable) filled his column two days later, and ended with this statement: "Perhaps if we made much of our national shrines and brought our children to them, they would be more truly bound, in these queer and disconcerting days, to our great national tradition."

The National Association of Travel Organizations notes that the great majority of domestic reports show consistent increases in travel of up to 15% over the corresponding period last year.

The 1951 budget of Shenandoah Valley, Inc., includes a $15,000 item for producing a sound motion picture dealing with historic and scenic points. Another $15,000 will be used for advertising.

A Society for the Preservation of Covered Bridges was formed in Boston early in the year. The preservation of historic buildings in Wichita, Kansas, will now be the principal concern of a new organization, Historic Wichita.

Colonial Williamsburg is now offering a new individual "military" ticket of admission at a reduced rate for service personnel - 60¢ for enlisted men and $1.10 for officers.

The Division of Archives and History of the State Education Department, New York, is distributing a new leaflet, "Protecting Local Public Records Against Bombing Attacks." Timely perhaps, but a bit disheartening.

The proposed development of Sandy Hook, New Jersey, as a recreational and historic area will probably be dropped because Fort Hancock, which occupies the site, may be reactivated as an Army base.

Reported elsewhere in these pages is the fact that the Lugo House and other structures in the Plaza, Los Angeles, were being torn down. Later intelligence says that a portion of it will be saved so that a replica of the Lugo House may be constructed in the future!